

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

CINCEUR

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C/AMEMBASSY LONDON 6132

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A I L MOSCOW 1206

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TAGS: PFOR, PARM, NATO, UR, US

SUBJ: IZVESTIYA ON MBFR

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

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1. SUMMARY. IZVESTIYA'S COMMENTARY JANUARY 24 ON THE
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OPENING OF THE EIGHTH ROUND OF MBFR NEGOTIATIONS IS
BOTH CONSIDERABLY LONGER AND SUBSTANTIALLY HARSHER IN

TONE THAN HAVE BEEN EARLIER COUNTERPARTS. IT CRITICIZES IN STANDARD TERMS THE ORIGINAL NATO PROPOSAL, AND IMPLIES THAT THE MAIN FAULT OF OPTION III IS THAT IT IS STILL TIED TOO CLOSELY TO THIS ORIGINAL. THE COMMENTARY THUS SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT WHILE THE SOVIETS SEE BENEFITS IN OPTION III, THEY ARE BALKING, NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, AT HAVING TO PAY THE FULL PRICE OF COMMON CEILINGS, ASYMMETRY, ETC., IN ORDER TO GET IT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE COMMENTARY, BY IZVESTIYA VIENNA CORRESPONDENTS K. PEREVOSHCHIKOV AND N. POLYANOV, IS SOMEWHAT LONGER --ABOUT FORTY PERCENT OF A FULL PAGE -- THAN HAS BEEN THE USUAL CASE FOR ROUND OPENERS IN THE PAST. IT SAYS LITTLE NEW, AND IS DISTINGUISHED ONLY BY ITS RELATIVELY HARSHER POLEMICAL TONE AND ITS SOMEWHAT SHARPER ATTACKS ON OPTION III.

3. THE COMMENTARY CRITICIZES FOR THE STANDARD REASONS FOUR SEPARATE ASPECTS OF THE ORIGINAL NATO PROPOSAL-- UNWILLINGNESS OF THE NON-U.S. PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE ON CONCRETE OBLIGATIONS; ASYMMETRY, COMMON CEILINGS; AND REFUSAL TO INCLUDE AIR FORCES--BEFORE ATTACKING OPTION III ON THE BASIS THAT A PRECONDITION OF THE RECENT WESTERN OFFER IS THAT THE COMMUNIST STATES ACCEPT "IN ITS TOTALITY" THIS ORIGINAL, FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW PATENTLY UNACCEPTABLE PROPOSAL. ALONG THE WAY IT STATES FRANKLY THAT "AMERICAN GROUND FORCES IN EUROPE ARE STILL FAR FROM (BEING) NATO'S BASIC MILITARY FORCE."

4. THE ARTICLE GOES A BIT FURTHER THAN EARLIER COMMENTARY IN ITS ATTACKS ON OPTION III, HOWEVER, BY

CRITICIZING THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL ITSELF. IT SAYS THAT THE NEW WESTERN OFFER, WHICH IT ARGUES WAS INTENDED TO HAVE A "STRONG PROPAGANDA EFFECT, AS A PRACTICAL MATTER DOES NOT AFFECT DELIVERY SYSTEMS FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS," NOTING THAT IN ANY CASE OTHER
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NATO STATES BESIDES THE U.S. ARE WELL EQUIPPED WITH SUCH SYSTEMS. CARRYING THE SAME POINT FURTHER, THE COMMENTARY ADDS THAT IT IS "CURIOUS" THAT A NUMBER OF WESTERN EUROPEAN NATO STATES FIRST PLACED NEW ORDERS FOR NUCLEAR-CAPABLE PHANTOM JETS, AND ONLY THEN DID NATO "GENEROUSLY" INTRODUCE ITS PROPOSAL "TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN NUCLEAR WARHEADS."

5. THE COMMENTARY CONCLUDES THAT WHILE REMNANTS OF THE COLD WAR ATMOSPHERE AS WELL AS HONEST DIFFERENCES

OF OPINION ON "THE SENSITIVE SECURITY INTERESTS" OF THE STATES INVOLVED ARE CREATING OBSTACLES TO AN AGREEMENT, THE MAIN OBSTACLE REMAINS THE WESTERN DESIRE TO GAIN UNILATERAL ADVANTAGE. DESPITE THIS, HOWEVER, THE COMMENTARY CONTENDS, THE COMMUNIST STATES WILL CONTINUE TO WORK FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO THE NEGOTIATIONS, ADDING THAT WARSAW PACT INTEREST IN SUCH AN OUTCOME RECEIVED FURTHER CONFIRMATION IN THE COMMUNIQUE OF THE WARSAW PACT FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN MOSCOW IN DECEMBER (FIRST REF).

6. COMMENT. EVEN THOUGH THE COMMENTARY'S TREATMENT OF OPTION III IS RELATIVELY HARSHER NOW THAN WAS THE ORIGINAL MEDIA REACTION TO THAT PROPOSAL (SECOND AND THIRD REFS), IT STILL BASES ITS PRIMARY CRITICISM ON THE PRICE THE WEST HAS CHOSEN TO PUT ON IT-- I.E., ACCEPTANCE OF THE ORIGINAL NATO PROPOSAL "IN ITS TOTALITY." IMPLICITLY, AT LEAST, THE COMMENTARY INDICATES THAT THE SOVIETS THUS SEE GOOD POINTS IN THE OFFER, BUT ARE BALKING--NOT UNEXPECTEDLY-- AT HAVING TO CONCEDE TO ASYMMETRIC REDUCTIONS IN ORDER TO BUY IT.

7. WE READ INCLUSION OF THE COMMENT THAT THE PACT STATES' INTENTION TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WAS RECONFIRMED DURING THE DECEMBER FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING AS A STRONG INDICATION THAT MBFR WAS INDEED DISCUSSED IN THAT FORUM, EVEN THOUGH AT LEAST ONE OF OUR BLOC SOURCES ARGUED THAT IT WAS NOT (FOURTH REF). IT
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THUS MAKES EVEN MORE PROBABLE THAT HUNGARIAN FOREIGN MINISTER PUJA'S RETURN TO MOSCOW JUST A FEW DAYS AFTER THAT MEETING WAS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON MBFR (FIFTH REF).
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